



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
July 13, 2020 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 2019-September 2020

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Noah Szugajew, Chair	P	10	0
April Kirk, Vice Chair	A	6	5
Jonathan Bennett	A	2	7
Elizabeth Cupido	P	10	0
Christina Disbrow	P	7	3
Mary Kinirons	P	9	1
Richard Morris	P	7	3
Christi Rice	A	9	2
Terra Sickler	P	8	2
Marisol Simon	P	10	0
Dana Somerstein	P	9	1

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Simone Flores, CDBG Grants Administrator
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, ProtoType, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of June 29, 2020, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Szugajew called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 8, 2020

Motion made by Mr. Morris, seconded by Ms. Kinirons, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG 2019-2020 PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

It was clarified that while Ms. Kinirons would recuse herself from voting on Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funding decisions, she was not restricted from participating in discussion about the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) agencies.

- **Women in Distress**

Thelma Addarich-Lopez, representing Women in Distress, reported that through June 2020, the organization has served 39 participants through 2119 bed nights. This has exceeded the goal of 35 participants for the year. Women in Distress still has unspent funds to last through the remainder of the year.

Simone Flores, CDBG Coordinator, advised that Staff will work with the agency to ensure it uses 100% of available funds. The City will also look into the possibility of extending the dates by which funds must be used.

- **HOMES, Inc.**

Linda Taylor, representing Housing Opportunities, Mortgage Assistance, and Neighborhood Solutions (H.O.M.E.S.), Inc., stated that the agency was awarded \$136,250, for which they have been reimbursed \$97,793.57 thus far. They have \$12,819 pending reimbursement for the month of June, after which they will have \$25,637.19 remaining.

So far in 2020, 28 youth have participated in the program, with 19 selected for its internship program. This exceeds the agency's goal of 25 recruited and 16 in internship. 100% of the 28 individuals participating have completed an employability and career assessment, and 100% of youth participating in the internship program have completed resume and interview preparations. 100% of the individuals in the internship program have completed a minimum of three interviews with partner agencies and participating employers. At present, 11 young people have successfully completed their internship assignments. 100% of participants have completed a monthly budget.

Chair Szugajew requested additional information on how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected internships and interviews. Ms. Taylor replied that of the 10 youth working at present, most have just begun working again within the last three weeks. From April to mid-June 2020, many of the businesses with which participants were employed either closed or scaled back their hours. CDBG funds are used to support the housing component of the program.

- **SoFIA**

Victoria Ruiz, representing the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), stated that as of June 30, 2020, the Senior Companion Program has worked with 21 volunteers who help provide companionship, supportive, and respite service to 28 Fort Lauderdale elderly and disabled individuals and their caregivers. 16 of the Fort Lauderdale residents served by the program did not fall within the specified millage area or were not comfortable providing the required documentation.

44 Fort Lauderdale residents received an in-home assessment by a case manager and were linked to community resources, volunteer companionship, and supportive services during the period of October 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The Senior Companion Program has received \$42,340 in CDBG funding, of which \$26,172.50 was expended by May 20, 2020. \$16,167.50 remains for the FY 2019-20 grant period.

According to surveys of clients in the Senior Companion Program, 94% of elderly individuals reported improvement in their home environment, nutritional condition, and feelings of loneliness against a goal of 85%. 100% of volunteers reported that they shared information with their clients from monthly in-service meetings and linked clients to community resources. 88% of respondents reported greater satisfaction with their lives as a result of weekly visits, and 100% of volunteers reported that they are more active and able to live independently. 100% of caregivers felt less stress in their lives as a result of respite services.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, SoFIA was forced to suspend in-home visits, as older adults are the most vulnerable population for the virus. Volunteers continue to support their clients through telephone or Zoom calls. At present, 76% of volunteers reported that they would be comfortable returning to their clients' homes following training and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The agency hopes to make a decision by the end of July regarding a return to home visits. Ms. Ruiz advised that it would be beneficial to the program to extend the CDBG contract by a few months in order to expend all funds.

Mr. Morris requested additional information about clients who did not report improvement as a result of home visits. Ms. Ruiz replied that the agency makes suggestions on activities that may be more stimulating to their clients. SoFIA mailed out 28 surveys, of which 18 have been returned thus far. They are also following up on surveys with telephone calls to participants.

- **Mount Bethel**

Marie Wells, representing Mount Bethel Human Services, reported 90% overall customer satisfaction with the agency's services. Clients are provided with a satisfaction questionnaire either immediately after services are received or at the end of the fiscal year, depending upon the type of services received. Clients participating in the food pantry program receive an acknowledgement of service form as well.

100% of clients receive a needs assessment and are provided with a list of Mount Bethel's services. Clients seeking jobs receive assistance in completing, revising, or creating resumes and are connected with partner employers. Mount Bethel works with partner agencies to assist with fees and testing.

Thus far, Mount Bethel has served 37 clients against a goal of 40 before the end of the fiscal year. No issues are anticipated in reaching the goal. Ms. Wells advised that the agency would likely have already met its goal if the COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred, as this crisis forced the office to close. At present, they have just begun taking appointments with clients once again.

Ms. Kinirons requested that when agencies submit their reports, they also provide the forms with actual percentage of outcomes achieved. Ms. Flores added that she can provide these templates to the agencies.

- **Center for Independent Living**

Brian Johnson, representing the Center for Independent Living, recalled that its CDBG program is a combination of housing assistance and barrier removal. As of June 30, 2020, they have served 37 clients against a goal of 17 to 35. Housing assistance consists of orientation, education on options and financial resources, assistance in seeking funding and/or job placement to supplement income, and connections to realtors. Some clients who were not yet ready to live independently received information on available services. The Center has successfully placed four individuals in housing by obtaining vouchers through different municipalities and other partner agencies.

The second part of the program addresses barrier removal, which has been a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency has provided two ramps and a bathroom modification. Independently living clients have remained able to live on their own. Mr. Johnson noted that the pandemic has made it more difficult to gain access to clients' homes, as individuals with disabilities are often at higher risk of contracting the virus and contractors are less comfortable working in homes. Of the 31 clients with whom the Center has worked, 100% of caregivers and/or individuals have reported improvement in their home environments and stress levels. Mr. Johnson provided an overview of how clients are assisted.

- **HOPE**

Charmaine Williams, representing Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence (HOPE), Inc., reported that the agency has met its goal of conducting seven fair housing educational outreach sessions. They have not yet met the goal of holding three housing and service provider training sessions, as the office has been closed since March 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic. These circumstances also make it more difficult to conduct outreach.

HOPE, Inc. has participated in four community events within Fort Lauderdale, exceeding their goal of two such events. They have not held their National Fair Housing Month event, at which the agency expected to assist 300 residents; however, until March, when the pandemic reached the United States, they had assisted 471 clients, exceeding their goal. They have published and physically distributed three issues of the HOPE Forum newsletter, with the fourth distributed via email blast.

Ms. Williams continued that the agency surpassed its goal of outreach to 175 residents in January 2020. This outreach provided education on housing provider transactions and practices and availability of resources. Financial information was not available at present but will be submitted to the Board when it becomes available. The agency is looking into the possibility of virtual workshops so they can continue outreach.

- **Turnstone Development**

Bill Schneider, representing Turnstone Development, stated that the agency has surveyed 240 residents to determine their needs. 39 of these individuals are participating in the program on an ongoing basis, exceeding the goal of 25. 66% of participants are currently employed, 12% are unemployed, 6% are disabled, and 16% are students.

All participants' incomes are under \$26,000/year. Services needed by clients included resume and job skills, financial literacy and budgeting, utility assistance, and rent forbearance. The agency met the needs of their targeted number of 25 individuals by 100%. 90% of job training participants completed community-based training.

Turnstone has billed 46% of their CDBG funds and retains \$20,046 in the program, and Mr. Schneider was confident they would meet their goals. The program is on track to cost \$58,100, of which the City's commitment was \$36,165. This represents a 61% leverage requirement. Programs include English as a second language (ESL), employment assistance, workshops, and computer training.

Chair Szugajew requested clarification of the number of residents served. Mr. Schneider explained that surveys count every household member, not only heads of households. Turnstone's building has 105 units.

Ms. Disbrow commended Turnstone on its positive outcomes and asked if the agency has contacted Broward College, whose Broward Up program offers classes that may assist with employability skills. Mr. Schneider replied that they would reach out with regard to this program.

- **Jack and Jill**

Jiwon Tilghman, representing Jack and Jill Children's Center, reported that the agency has spent \$15,352 year-to-date and has served six clients against a goal of 12 to 20. 100% of participating parents have been able to seek and retain employment and/or schooling with the child care assistance provided. 82% of parents receiving child care assistance have maintained or increased their household income against a target of 75%. The average income increase was 33%.

93% of children served by the program have made pre-academic developmental progress equal to or greater than their number of months participating. This exceeded the target of 85%. 90% of children who were assessed as below age-appropriate developmental milestones have made progress equal to or greater than their months in the program, and 100% of parents attending the 10-week parent education program have shown improvement and remain outside the at-risk range for positive parenting beliefs and expectations.

Jack and Jill closed its center due to the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March and reopened on June 8, 2020. During physical closure, teachers remained engaged with children and maintained contact through Zoom calls. Parents received remote access to the agency's case managers as well. The pandemic has limited the agency's ability to spend the amount of funding they would normally use. Ms. Tilghman hoped the City would be able to extend the deadline by which funds must be spent.

Upon reopening, Jack and Jill modified its practices so classrooms included two teachers and eight children in order to observe Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – recommended social distancing guidelines. Enrollment is significantly lower at present for this reason.

Ms. Kinirons recommended that all agencies return standardized forms with performance indicators in addition to their individual presentations.

V. HOPWA 2018-2019 ALLOCATIONS

Ms. Kinirons recused herself from HOPWA discussions due to a conflict of interest.

- **BRHPC**

Sharon Alveranga-Jones and Rhode Rosulme-Rock, representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), reviewed the agency's two-year proposal for the Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) and hotel voucher assistance programs. The salary for a part-time reviewer in year one would be \$33,000 with 20% fringe benefits of \$9900, and \$900 for postage and office supplies. Direct costs for year one would be \$45,400, with administrative costs of 3% at \$3178. The year one total would be \$48,578.

Year two would reflect a 3% salary and fringe benefits increase to \$33,990, with the costs of postage and office supplies remaining the same. Administrative charges would be \$3268.09. The year two total would be \$49,955.09. The total request for STRMU and hotel voucher assistance is \$98,533.09. The total two-year request for BRHPC is \$269,173.09, including \$170,640 to serve four clients.

Ms. Rosulme-Rock addressed the tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV) program, for which the agency is requesting funding to serve four additional clients. The program hopes to add four new clients, which would bring them back to the original number of clients served when funding began in 2018-2019. The fair market rate for housing is determined as follows:

- \$1135/one-bedroom unit (\$13,620 for one year, \$27,240 for two years)
- \$1444/two-bedroom unit (\$17,328 for one year, \$34,656 for two years)
- \$2088/three-bedroom unit (\$25,056 for one year, \$50,112 for two years)
- \$2443/four-bedroom unit (\$29,316 for one year, \$58,632 for two years)

This results in a two-year total of \$170,640, which averages out to a monthly expense of \$42,660 per client. The agency does not know the size of the units needed when moving clients into the program. If there are funds left over after four clients are selected, it may be possible to assist another client or clients or, alternatively, return some of the funds to the City.

- **MODCO**

This agency was not discussed.

- **Care Resource**

Rafael Jimenez, representing Care Resource, reviewed the organization's history since it began receiving HOPWA funds. Thus far in FY 2019-20, they have assisted 555 unduplicated clients, which is 85% above the contractual number of 300 clients. Their current funding grant is \$262,000.

Care Resource requests an additional case manager at \$67,550 for year one and \$69,380 for year two. This amount covers salaries, \$500 in office expenses, and administrative costs. Their total request is \$138,680 over two years. At present the agency has 3.5 case managers to serve all their clients. Mr. Jimenez estimated that each case manager has a caseload of roughly 150 clients.

- **Broward House**

Stacy Hyde, representing Broward House, advised that this agency provides an assisted living environment for facility-based housing. They accept clients who have been homeless, hospitalized, incarcerated, and other circumstances, and provide those clients with a full spectrum of services, in which case management is embedded. Costs

include living expenses and meals. The agency continues to provide services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Broward House is funded for 44 beds, as well as an additional nine beds for which the Community Services Board (CSB) approved one-time funding earlier this year. They hope to maintain their current level of beds for the next two years at an estimated cost of \$508,000 for two years (\$254,000 per year). This amount will fund nine beds per day or over 19,000 bed-days per year.

- **Legal Aid**

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid of Broward County, stated that the agency is requesting funds for one full-time attorney position. The demand for their services is likely to increase still further after the state's moratorium on evictions is lifted on August 1, 2020. The number of individuals who will need legal services is not yet known.

Legal Aid requests \$75,000 for each of the two years as well as an additional \$3000 per year to retain a paralegal with a salary increase, as this individual will be taking on more work. This is a two-year total of \$156,000. They have served 85 unduplicated clients thus far, but are expecting this number to increase.

- **SunServe**

Tiffany Arieagus, representing SunServe, advised that most of the agency's staff is working remotely. Their request would cover the cost of more equipment so they may return to their offices and work more closely with clients. Costs are estimated as follows:

- 7 new office chairs at \$1399
- 3 new computers at \$3289.02
- 3 new four-drawer file cabinets at \$577.77
- Total expenditure: \$5266.72

Ms. Arieagus advised that if there are sufficient funds remaining, SunServe would also like to give their housing case managers a small raise in salary.

Chair Szugajew requested clarification that funds may be spent on equipment. Ms. Williams confirmed that this expenditure is allowed, with documentation that the items belong to the HOPWA program and not to SunServe itself.

The Board members discussed the agencies' proposals, which exceed the \$1 million total available by \$75,000. Mr. Morris observed that in recent years, HOPWA has been moving away from the TBRV model. He suggested that BRHPC limit the expansion of this program to two new clients rather than four, which would eliminate roughly \$80,000 over two years. Another option could be decreasing the number of beds provided to Broward House.

Ms. Simon noted that the easiest way to allocate these funds is to decrease funding across the board and provide each agency with 92.5% of their request. Ms. Cupido added that the reduction of one bed at Broward House would save approximately \$20,000. Chair Szugajew noted that reducing the number of new clients in BRHPC's TBRV program would allow the other agencies' proposals to remain intact.

Mr. Morris explained that his proposal is to reduce the number of units served by BRHPC by half, which would lower their allocation to roughly \$183,000. Ms. Dsouza calculated that this would leave \$10,162.69 to be allocated to another agency.

Motion made by Mr. Morris, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to adjust the units for the number of available TBRV clients from four to two, providing funding for \$85,320, and leaving the additional \$10,162.69 in reserve to be allocated at a future time. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-0 (Ms. Somerstein not voting). (Ms. Kinirons abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.)

Mr. Morris asked if Ms. Arieagus could provide the Board with an estimated cost of providing SunServe's housing case managers with a raise. Ms. Arieagus replied that case managers at her agency have significantly lower starting pay than case managers at larger agencies. There are five case managers in addition to her.

Motion made by Ms. Cupido, seconded by Mr. Morris, that the remaining \$10,162.69 is fully allocated to SunServe [and] that they can distribute [the funds] to their case managers' salaries. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 5-1 (Ms. Simon dissenting; Ms. Somerstein did not vote). (Ms. Kinirons abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.)

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Dsouza advised that the June 8, 2020 minutes require corrections to specific figures:

- P.6, paragraph 3: the award for HOPWA should be \$1,035,298, and the amount left after administrative costs should be \$973,108
- P.7, paragraph 1: the March/April 2020 amount for MODCO should be \$6803, with another \$15,000 for May/June/July 2020 and \$25,000 in additional Board-approved funds through December 2020

Ms. Dsouza clarified that the corrections to the minutes do not affect the funds allocated to agencies.

Motion made by Mr. Morris, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, to amend the minutes as discussed. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was decided that the Board would not meet in the month of August.

Chair Szugajew requested that Staff reach out to the City Manager regarding extension of the deadlines for expenditure of CDBG funds, as well as for billing during months when the agencies were closed.

Linda Taylor, representing Housing Opportunities, Mortgage Assistance, and Neighborhood Solutions (HOMES), Inc., advised that she has received a notice for monitoring; however, tenants in her properties have expressed concern with allowing individuals to come into their homes for inspections due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. She asked if it would be possible to postpone these inspections. Ms. Williams replied that it is possible to postpone inspections or do them remotely.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, ProtoType, Inc.]